

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 26, 2007

Contact:

[Julie MacSwain](#), State Public Affairs Specialist, (651) 602-7859

[Robin Martinek](#), State Agronomist (651)-602-7866

Protect your USDA Program Eligibility and Benefits: Remember Conservation When Preparing for Spring Planting

St. Paul, MN-Don't forget to check your conservation plan prior to making your final planting decisions this spring, says, _____, District Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in _____. "Always review your conservation plan prior to planting your spring crop, in order to stay eligible for USDA Programs," said _____.

With current high corn prices, some farmers in Minnesota are changing their current farming operation to include the planting of more corn on their farming acreage. To meet the demand, farmers in Minnesota maybe growing more corn in 2007. NRCS recognizes the importance of market changes and profit margins, but wants to remind farmers of the need to continue protecting Minnesota's valuable soil and water resources. Producers who are preparing for spring planting should consider stopping by the local NRCS field office to review the contents of the conservation plans with local NRCS officials, or to find out about USDA conservation programs such as EQIP.

"Conservation compliance, which began with the 1985 Farm Bill, is still in effect," says _____. "That means farmers need to control erosion on highly erodible land in order to stay eligible for USDA program benefits. And those benefits are substantial, because they include the Farm Loan programs and Disaster Assistance in addition to commodity price support programs available through USDA."

"Anyone who plans to participate in USDA programs now or in the near future should check with NRCS if there are questions about the content of their conservation plan," says _____. USDA program participants are responsible for ensuring their conservation plan or system is applied and maintained in order to remain eligible for USDA program benefits.

The planting of corn following corn in the crop might increase the amount of tillage being done potentially on a farm field as well as the amount of nitrogen needed or applied. This could have water quality implications due to increased runoff. Additionally, farmers also need to be alert to possible ephemeral erosion in their farm fields in order to maintain program eligibility. Ephemeral erosion refers to channels and gullies, from a few inches up to several feet wide that form in tilled fields after rains. Control of ephemeral erosion is also a farm bill requirement.

For additional information about NRCS in Minnesota, please visit the NRCS field office in _____ or visit the NRCS website at: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer